Moderator’s Message: May 1, 2017

May 2, 2017

by J.R. Finney, Conference Moderator

I grew up hearing often an old saying that goes like this: “Don’t let your good be the enemy of your better and your better, the enemy of your best.” The idea is if we hold on to tightly to what we think is good, we often fail to let go of that good so that we can achieve our better or our best. That old saying took on a new meaning for me as I prepared for Easter Sunday after reading the lectionary scriptures for Easter 2017. (Acts 10:34-43 and John 20:1-18).

In John 20, after Mary Magdalene realizes it is the Risen Jesus talking to her, she evidently goes to embrace her dear friend, Jesus. But Jesus rebuffs her saying in verse 17, “Don’t hold on to me, for I haven’t yet gone up to my Father.” Why would Jesus do that to her? As I pondered that question, I began to let my mind wander. What if Jesus used this incident as a metaphor to teach Mary and us the lesson of that old saying of not “letting your good be the enemy of your better or your best.”

Obviously, Mary was overjoyed to see that Jesus whom she loved was alive. However, maybe Jesus wanted her and us to realize that though He was alive, His resurrection means that things have changed. To experience the fullness of God in our lives, we can’t hold on to the Jesus we knew before Good Friday. We must let go and embrace the wholeness of God in Christ that is only made possible by Christ’s resurrection on Easter.

Are we holding on to the good of only a pre-Good Friday Jesus? If so, perhaps only in letting go as Peter did in Acts 10 while preaching at the Gentile Cornelius’ home, will you be able to embrace all of who the Resurrected Christ is, and experienced God’s better and best among us as the Southeastern Conference of the United Church of Christ.

We, as the Southeast Conference (UCC), are faced with some wonderful challenges for the future. Good practices of the past should be used as lessons to learned from, but they should never keep us from developing better or best practices we need to go forward and perform with excellence the ministry God has for us.

My hope and prayer is that we will learn all we can from the good practices of our past; but “never let our good be the enemy of our better and our better, the enemy of our best.”